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ABSTRACT

The "Contemporary Health Series" covers critical health and family life topics in a sequence of modules with two curricular divisions: "Into Adolescence" for middle school teachers and "Entering Adulthood" for high school teachers. This module provides high school students with specific tools to plan for their futures beyond high school. The module begins with the creation of a life-planning notebook that is used as an organizing theme throughout the lessons and that, when completed, becomes a valuable resource for students. Lesson 1, Becoming Independent, helps students to understand why life-planning skills are valuable. Lesson 2, Looking Ahead, asks students to consider the challenges of moving beyond high school and into adulthood. The activities in lesson 3, Discovering Me, encourage students to increase their self-knowledge as the first step in planning for the future. In lesson 4, Creating a Vision, students explore options for the future as the second step in the life-planning process. In lesson 5, Achieving Dreams, students move on to the critical third step in the process--learning and practicing goal-setting skills. In the sixth and final lesson, Thinking for Success, students consider the relationship of positive attitudes to personal success and examine the characteristics of successful people. (NB)

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ENTERING ADULTHOOD

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Planning Life Directions

Susan J. Hart

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CONTEMPORARY HEALTH SERIES

Kathleen Eddleton, MS, Series Editor

ENTERING ADULthood:

Planning
Life Directions

ENTERING ADULthood:

Planning
Life Directions

A Curriculum for Grades 9-12

Susan J. Hart

Contemporary Health Series
Kathleen Middleton, MS, Series Editor

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DEDICATION

To John, K-Lee and Mikah. You are the most precious of gifts. I love and appreciate you.

—SJH

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Contemporary Health Series

Health educators and practitioners know that prevention of health problems is far more desirable than treatment. The earlier the knowledge and skill to make healthful decisions are instilled, the greater the chance a healthful lifestyle will be adopted. School is the logical place in our society to provide children, adolescents and young adults the learning opportunities essential to developing the knowledge and skills to choose a healthful life course.

The **Contemporary Health Series** has been designed to provide educators with the curricular tools necessary to challenge students to take personal responsibility for their health. The long range goals for the **Contemporary Health Series** are as follows:

Cognitive. Students will recognize the function of the existing body of knowledge pertaining to health and family life education.

Affective. Students will experience personal growth in the development of a positive self-concept and the ability to interact with others.

Practice. Students will gain skill in acting on personal decisions about health-related life choices.

Within the **Contemporary Health Series** there are two curricular divisions: Into Adolescence for middle school teachers and Entering Adulthood for high school teachers. The Into Adolescence modules focus on several different health and family life topics. Modules addressing puberty, AIDS, the family, self-esteem, reproduction and birth, sexual abstinence, and drug, alcohol and tobacco education have been developed by skilled author/educators.

Entering Adulthood includes reproduction, birth and contraception, health behavior, communication and self-esteem, AIDS and other STDs, relationships, sexual abstinence, and drug, alcohol and tobacco education.

All the authors are, or have been, classroom teachers with particular expertise in each of the topic areas. They bring a unique combination of theory, content and practice resulting in curricula which weave educational learning theory into lessons appropriate for the developmental age of the student. The module format was chosen to facilitate flexibility as the modules are compatible with each other but may stand alone. Finally, ease of use by the classroom teacher has driven the design. The lessons are comprehensive, key components are clearly identified and masters for all student and teacher materials are provided.

The **Contemporary Health Series** is intended to help teachers address critical health issues in their classrooms. The beneficiaries are their students, our children, and the next generation.

Kathleen Middleton, MS, CHES
Series Editor

INTRODUCTION

For some teens, the high school years are a time of fun; for others, a time of struggle and pain. Regardless of what's gone before, most students anticipate the senior year of high school with enthusiasm and excitement. The senior year offers the status of finally being "at the top."

For most students, graduation means that after a 12-year climb through the grade levels, their lives will be different. They will finally be able to move on to life experiences of their own choosing.

Young people must be convinced that they have what it takes to reach this level of achievement—and that it will be worth the time and effort to do so. Students must also be prepared to move beyond these prescribed years to create a place for themselves in the world.

Entering Adulthood: Planning Life Directions is designed specifically for young people preparing to make this transition from the structured progression through the grade levels to the uncertainty of the post-high school years. The lessons in this module offer young people learning opportunities for finding positive perspectives on life and life changes.

The lessons also offer reassurance about students' ability to achieve what they want and need in their adult lives. Throughout the module, techniques are presented to help students develop the motivation and skills they need to make their dreams reality.

Life planning offers young people a way to contemplate and create their personal futures—

today, tomorrow and in the years to come. Teens need to have positive and realistic expectations of themselves and their futures if they are to have purpose and direction in their lives.

This curriculum suggests that life planning and the development of life-planning skills are critically important to the high school student. It also suggests that these skills are part of an ongoing process that continues throughout adulthood.

Students should be encouraged to use their high school years as a time to begin to focus on a life direction. These years also provide students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence that will help them attain their goals.

It is important to emphasize that students will, as years pass, continue to learn a great deal about themselves and about what the world has to offer them. They and the world will change over time. Continued life planning will allow them to direct and redirect their lives to adapt to changes.

The learning strategies used in the curriculum actively involve students in the learning process. Students are asked to challenge their own thoughts and attitudes, to draw upon the insights of others whom they respect and admire, and to assimilate knowledge.

The time required to complete this module is approximately eight to ten class periods. Timing will be affected significantly by the students' current knowledge, attitudes and skill levels and by the instructor's own teaching style. Teachers should approach the concepts and strategies at a pace that is comfortable and beneficial for all.

Overview

The module begins with the creation of a life-planning notebook. This notebook is used as an organizing theme throughout the lessons. When completed, it can be a valuable resource for students.

Class discussion of a "lifeline," and feelings about high school graduation and the years beyond are the focus of the first lesson.

In Lesson 2, students consider the challenges of moving into adulthood. The activities in Lesson 3 encourage students to increase their self-knowledge as the first step in planning for the future.

In Lesson 4, students explore options for the future as the second step in the life-planning process. In Lesson 5, students move on to the critical third step in the process—learning and practicing goal-setting skills.

In the final lesson, students consider the relationship of positive attitudes to personal success and examine the characteristics of successful people.

Objectives

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Lesson 1 | <i>Becoming Independent</i> | ■ Students will be able to explain why life-planning skills are valuable. |
| Lesson 2 | <i>Looking Ahead</i> | ■ Students will be able to describe potential difficulties in the transition to adulthood, and ways to prepare for them. |
| Lesson 3 | <i>Discovering Me</i> | ■ Students will be able to illustrate self-knowledge.
■ Students will be able to explain the need for different life plans for different people. |
| Lesson 4 | <i>Creating a Vision</i> | ■ Students will be able to describe a personally desirable future. |
| Lesson 5 | <i>Achieving Dreams</i> | ■ Students will be able to explain the importance of goal setting to life planning.
■ Students will be able to demonstrate goal-setting skills. |
| Lesson 6 | <i>Thinking for Success</i> | ■ Students will be able to illustrate the impact of positive and negative thinking on goal achievement.
■ Students will be able to identify attitudes that foster personal success. |

Time

The time indicated for each lesson is an approximate measure, based on a 45-50 minute class period. The actual time required to complete all activities in a given lesson will vary, depending on student interest and ability. Lessons that will probably require more than one class period to complete are indicated.

Instructional Strategies

There are a myriad of instructional strategies available to today's teacher. A large variety are found within this module. I have chosen to offer my definition of the following strategies, which I consider *key* to the success of these lessons.

Classroom Displays

Classroom displays reinforce key information. This peripheral learning can be of particular benefit to marginal students, or students for whom life planning is a new concept. Much of the

material in this module can be very simply adapted or re-created for display on walls and bulletin boards. Each lesson includes suggestions for classroom display.

Create the displays only as the information is presented, so students won't attempt to integrate new ideas before they are introduced. Students could be asked to take responsibility for individual lesson displays as an assignment or for extra credit.

If space allows, develop a collection of displays. As the module is completed, the room will reflect the whole picture of the learning experience. Some materials may be appropriate for permanent display to help students stay focused on the concept of life planning.

Continuum Voting

Continuum voting is a discussion technique. Students express the extent to which they agree or disagree with a statement read by the teacher. To prepare the classroom for this activity, post an **Agree** sign on one wall and a **Disagree** sign on the opposite wall. There should be room for students to move freely between the two signs.

When continuum voting begins, ask students to stand between the two signs. Tell them to view the distance between the two signs as a continuum. Explain that you will be reading statements and asking students to *mentally, physically and verbally* react to them.

After hearing a statement, students should decide how they think or feel about it. They should then move to the point between the signs of the continuum that reflects their thoughts or feelings. The closer to the **Agree** sign they stand, the stronger their agreement. The closer to the **Disagree** sign they stand, the stronger their disagreement. A position in the center between the two signs indicates a neutral stance.

When all students have chosen a position, conduct a discussion about the thoughts and feelings that explain their positions. The discussion should be voluntary. Students should be allowed to pass if they prefer not to explain their positions. Continuum voting provides for active involvement of all students and often stimulates high-energy discussions.

Discussion

Although the module contains guidelines and key points for each lesson's discussions, they are intended to serve as background information only. Let the worksheets, activities, discussion questions and your own creativity encourage students to generate these important concepts for themselves.

Allowing students to discover for themselves what you could more quickly and efficiently tell them serves many purposes:

- It minimizes use of a "preachy tone," which often offends young people.
- It encourages students to do their own thinking and reasoning.

- It enables young people to move from their current level of thinking and knowledge toward the target recognitions.
- It enhances retention of the learning.

What you can guide students to discover is worth much more than anything you can tell them.

Forced Choice

Forced choice is a discussion technique that requires students to identify with one of only two statements made by the teacher. To prepare for the discussion, ask students to stand together in a central position in the classroom. Explain to them that you will be making two statements, and that one side of the room or the other will represent each of these choices.

Ask students to listen to the two statements and then, without discussion, move to the side of the room that represents the statement with which they most agree. Encourage students to take a stance and not to remain in the central position.

When all students have made a choice, conduct a discussion. Ask students on one side to explain why they chose the statement they did. Allow students on that side to complete their sharing without comment or question from students on the other side. When they have finished, ask the remaining students to share their reasoning for choosing as they did.

Only after students on both sides have completed their explanations should questions or comments be allowed in response to what students on the opposing side have said. At this point too, it is appropriate to ask if anyone—after listening to the discussion—would like to change his or her stance.

As with continuum voting, participation in this discussion should be voluntary. Students should be allowed to pass when questioned about their position. A forced choice discussion can actively involve most if not all students, and result in a high-energy discussion.

Guest Speakers

Well-chosen guest speakers can be used effectively throughout this module to provide extra insight and emphasis to many key points. If your students are facing numerous obstacles and need to know that obstacles can be overcome, a guest speaker may be appropriate. Invite someone into your classroom who has overcome similar odds.

Know enough about the guest speaker ahead of time to determine her or his appropriateness in this role. Give the speaker clear guidelines that define the parameters and expectations of the task.

Teacher Responsibilities

This module is written for 9th-12th grade students. Differences in age, sex, culture and socio-economic factors will undoubtedly influence students' familiarity with, understanding of and

receptivity to the life-planning concepts. In order to accommodate these differences and maximize student learning, I offer the following recommendations:

Vocabulary

As in any teaching situation, it is important to use the appropriate vocabulary for your students as you conduct discussions, ask questions and share information. It is also important, however, that students build an understanding of the key terminology of life planning.

To make these key terms easier to identify, they are italicized as they are introduced in the various lessons. Lesson 1 contains a vocabulary list for all of these terms. As each term is introduced, ask students to highlight the term on the list.

Parents

Much of life-planning education for high school students focuses on helping them make the transition from dependence to independence. The term *parents* is often used to describe those individuals who have been responsible for the students through the early years of their lives.

Some students in your class may not have been raised by parents. Be sensitive to the variety of life situations of your students. Explain that the term *parents* includes mothers, fathers, grandparents, step-parents, adoptive parents or any other adult care givers. As you refer to parents during the module, you can then say, "...parents, or whoever has been responsible for you."

Personal Sharing

This module focuses on helping students create an awareness of who they are and what they want their place in this world to be. It also guides students to develop skills that enable them to reach these goals.

To accomplish this, the module requires a great deal of introspection. Students are asked to write or talk about their self-discoveries, ideas, opinions, hopes and dreams.

To maximize students' ability to share with each other, create a comfortable learning environment. Ask students not to label each other as crazy or stupid, but to express and explain their agreement or disagreement with each other's ideas.

If students express ideas that place them in the minority, it may be helpful to stand quietly beside them for moral support. Even if you disagree with a student's contribution, acknowledge and accept it without judgment (e.g., "If I understand you, what you're saying is..."; "My concern with this is..."; "How do the rest of you feel about what has been said?").

Use positive strokes generously. Afford privacy to the written activities that are to be placed in the *Personal Insights* section of the life-planning notebook. Do not attempt to grade students on these personal insights.

Evaluative Methods

Each lesson provides the teacher with one or more methods for evaluating student performance on stated objectives. The methods are listed following the procedure section of each lesson. Evaluative methods include analysis and comment on worksheets and other written materials, as well as observation of individual responses.

It is impossible to objectively, quantitatively or qualitatively measure the development and maintenance of goal-setting and life-planning skills, and it is inappropriate to grade student work that is reflective of individual feelings, beliefs or behaviors. Therefore, the evaluation methods serve as tools to assess students' participation and cognitive learning from each lesson.

LESSON**1**

BECOMING INDEPENDENT

Objective

Students will be able to explain why life-planning skills are valuable.

Time

One class period, and additional time for follow-up discussion when homework is completed.

Overview

Throughout their school years, students' life plans have been predictable. Most students move comfortably from one grade level to the next. Many have failed to contemplate their futures beyond these years.

In this lesson, students begin a life-planning notebook, which is used to organize student work throughout the module. They explore their feelings about their high school years, graduation and adult years in class discussion of a lifeline. A homework assignment and follow-up discussion encourage students to talk to adults about adulthood.

Teacher Materials and Preparation

HAVE:

- ✓ Overhead projector.
- ✓ Chalk and chalkboard.
- ✓ Art supplies and magazines, to be used in decorating notebook title page (optional).

COPY:

- ✓ **A Life-Planning Notebook** title page, one for each student.
- ✓ **Life-Planning Vocabulary** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **The Voice of Experience** worksheet, one for each student.

MAKE:

- ✓ Transparency of **The Stonecutter** and (optional) poster for classroom display.
- ✓ Lifeline chart for classroom display (optional).

Key Points

- The high school years are an important time for developing the knowledge and skills necessary for independent living.
- Life planning is an ongoing process that offers a sense of purpose. A life plan makes it possible to direct and redirect our lives as the need or interest arises.

Procedure

- Introduce the *Entering Adulthood: Planning Life Directions* module. Tell students that confidence, knowledge, skills and a sense of purpose and direction will help them move comfortably and successfully into the years after high school.

Show students **The Stonecutter** transparency. Discuss the meaning of the quotation with students.

- Tell students they will each be required to keep a life-planning notebook. (The notebook can be created during class if time allows, or as a homework assignment.) Explain that students are to use this notebook to organize their work during these lessons. Emphasize that the notebook can be a valuable life-planning tool.

The notebook should be a ring binder with four sections. The sections should be labeled *Personal Insights*, *Borrowed Insights*,

Information and Goals. Each section will be used for different information, as indicated in the following list:

- *Personal Insights*—the student's own personal thoughts
- *Borrowed Insights*—ideas and information gained from examining and talking to others
- *Information*—reminders and references on life planning and goal setting
- *Goals*—student goals, progress and achievement

All worksheets are labeled to aid students in notebook organization.

Encourage students to be creative in designing the notebook and its dividers. They can use their own art work, a collection of inspirational quotes, or pictures clipped from magazines to personalize their notebooks.

Distribute **A Life-Planning Notebook** title page. Tell students to complete the subtitle. Examples of possible subtitles are "My Personal Guide to the Future" or "My Time, My Way." Students can decorate the title page as desired.

■ Distribute the **Life-Planning Vocabulary** worksheet. Explain that this is the first entry for the life-planning notebook. It should be placed in the *Information* section.

Tell students to keep this worksheet in the front of the information section so it can be easily used as a reference. As each new term is introduced during these lessons, have students highlight the term on their vocabulary list.

■ Lead a class discussion about the senior year experience and feelings about graduation. Ask students to remember how they felt about seniors and the senior year of high school when they were in middle school or junior high.

Younger students often feel there is a wide gap between them and what appear to be huge seniors housed in adult-like bodies. Ask students if they were ever a little in awe of seniors. Did they feel envious of seniors—who are nearly done with their required education?

Ask students if their perceptions and feelings have changed since starting high school. If there are seniors in the class, ask them to

share their feelings about being "on top" and nearing graduation.

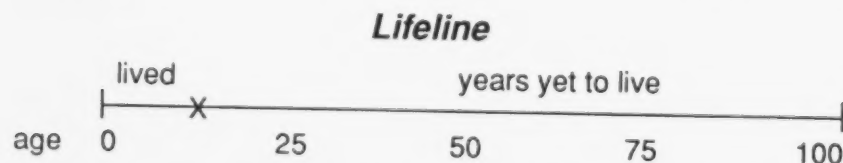
Acknowledge the mixed emotions many seniors have about graduation. Generally, students who know what their next step will be enjoy the senior year most and are most excited about graduation. These students are enthusiastic about their choices. On the other hand, uncertainty and self-doubt make this time in their lives seem difficult.

Optional: If there are no seniors in your class, ask a few seniors or recent graduates to be classroom guests. Younger students can benefit from the seniors' insights. Note that many seniors are surprised by how quickly the high school years pass and how unprepared they feel for graduation.

■ Draw and label a lifeline on the chalkboard. Americans are living longer, healthier lives, so number the line at the 0-, 25-, 50-, 75- and 100-year marks. (As an aside, note that illness, disease, accidents, etc., may mean a shorter life span for some. However, for most students, this extended line is probably not too unrealistic. Be sensitive to students in the classroom who may have life-limiting conditions.)

Ask students to reflect on the number of years they have already lived (14, 15, 16). Do they feel they've lived a long time? They've moved from being infants to being increasingly capable young people.

Mark students' ages on the lifeline with an X. Note that several years have passed, and in that time, students have acquired much knowledge and many skills. However, many more years lie on the far side of high school graduation. Illustrate this concept with the diagram.



■ Tell students that the years *before* high school graduation are very different from the years that *follow*. Ask them to identify the key differences between these two portions (not halves!) of the life experience. Ask how long it takes to complete these changes.

Focus the discussion on the shifts in *responsibility* and *control* and the movement from *dependence* to *independence*. Have students highlight *responsible*, *control*, *dependent* and *independent* on the vocabulary list. Note that this movement is a transition, a gradual process with no specific time table.

Acknowledge that this transition can be difficult. Some students may reach independence even before high school graduation. Others may never achieve it. Encourage students to recognize that their responsibility for themselves has already increased.

For most students, the transition to greater independence will continue for several months to several years after high school graduation. This extended transition is especially true for those who continue their formal education.

Emphasize that the transition to independence presents unique challenges for everyone. Generally, people are independent most of their lives. In order to create the lives they want and need, students must develop life-planning skills. They will also need knowledge and skills to help them achieve their goals.

Optional: Discuss how different cultures, especially those with strong extended families, may encourage and support *interdependence* of family members. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds may be able to provide helpful insights. Tell students to highlight *interdependent* on the vocabulary list.

Evaluation

Evaluate students' responses during class discussion to assess their growth in understanding the importance of life planning.

Homework

Ask students to use the questions on **The Voice of Experience** worksheet to interview three adults they respect. Explain that we often feel a need to discover everything for ourselves. Yet, others have much knowledge and insight to offer us—if only we ask them to share with us.

What others know or believe may be helpful to us. But we can't know that unless we are willing to listen and consider what they say.

Focus a class discussion for this assignment on the following questions:

- Did you receive similar insights from everyone you interviewed?
- How would you explain the similarities and differences?
- Were the insights what you expected to hear? Why or why not?
- What ideas do you feel you will benefit from most? Why?

The Stonecutter

When nothing seems to help,
I go and look at a stonecutter
hammering away at his rock
perhaps a hundred times
without so much as a crack
showing in it. Yet at the
hundred and first blow it will
split in two, and I know that it
was not that blow that did
it...but all that had gone be-
fore.

Jacob Riis

A Life-Planning Notebook

My _____

Life-Planning Vocabulary

adulthood—the time in life when a person is fully grown, mature or of legal age

control—the power to direct, influence or regulate

dependent—needing the help and support of others

goal—an aim or purpose; a well-defined, reasonable dream with action steps and deadlines

independent—able to take care of yourself; having the income and ability to support yourself

insight—the ability or opportunity to look within yourself (or another) to gain a deeper understanding of feelings and attitudes

interdependent—sharing support; dependent on each other

life planning—the process of developing specific goals for your life

power—great ability to do, act or influence; the ability to control others

responsible—accountable for your behavior

safety zone—those things in life that are comfortable and need little thought or effort

self-knowledge—awareness of your personal qualities, abilities, interests and limitations

success—gaining something you desired

values—principles or goals that are considered worthwhile or good

The Voice of Experience

Directions: Using the following questions as a guide, interview three adults about adulthood. Choose people you respect and admire. Use a separate sheet of paper for the write-up of each interview.

1. How would you describe adulthood?
2. How does adulthood compare with the teen years?
3. Did you feel ready for adulthood when you were 18?
4. What did you do to prepare yourself for adulthood?
5. What do you wish you had done differently? Why?
6. Have your ideas about what you want for yourself changed over the years? Why or why not?
7. What advice do you have for me and people my age?

LESSON**2**

LOOKING AHEAD

Objective

Students will be able to describe potential difficulties in the transition to adulthood, and ways to prepare for them.

Time

One or two class periods.

Overview

Some people have described the teen years as the best years of one's life. However, as the lifeline in the first lesson illustrated, most of a person's life lies on the far side of the teen years. *Each* year of one's life has the potential to be the best.

Students use a worksheet and work in small groups to analyze the challenge of making the transition to adulthood. Specific assignments encourage students to personalize their understanding of being an adult. Students participate in a continuum voting process to help them refine their beliefs about important life issues.

Teacher Materials and Preparation

COPY:

- ✓ **Life After Graduation** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **Are You Ready for the Future?** student page, one for each student.
- ✓ **Reflections** worksheet, one for each student.

MAKE:

- ✓ Classroom display from **Reflections** worksheet, Question 1 (optional).

REVIEW:

- ✓ **Successful Living Continuum Voting.**
- ✓ Continuum voting strategy description in the introduction.

Key Points

- Ideally, young people will enjoy what the teen years have to offer, just as they will enjoy what each year thereafter has to offer.
- Knowledge, skills and a sense of purpose and direction are not going to magically appear at high school graduation.
- Students must begin to develop these traits while there is time, space and opportunity.
- We have a tremendous capacity to influence what our lives are to become.
- Developing a strong personal philosophy of success helps us create and maintain appropriate life goals.

Procedure

- Distribute the **Life After Graduation** worksheet. Encourage students to generate as many responses to the questions on the worksheet as they can. Then divide the class into groups of three to five students. Tell students to discuss their ideas in their groups. A group recorder should take notes on the discussion.

Ask each group to share its ideas in a class discussion. Encourage students to add to their worksheets any new ideas shared by others.

Tell students that our society emphasizes the importance of

education. A high school diploma offers people the opportunity to acquire:

- the basic knowledge and skills needed to live independently in this country
- extra time to mature before assuming full responsibility for themselves
- better-paying jobs
- higher education

Optional: Provide an overview of what your state does to encourage students to stay in school through high school graduation. For example, some states deny driver's licenses to students who choose to drop out; others have raised the age limits for G.E.D. (general equivalency diploma) eligibility.

■ Distribute **Are You Ready for the Future?** This is a student page designed to provide information in an easy-to-read format. Allow students time to read it individually. Then lead a class discussion of the information.

■ Tell students to think about what successful living means. Explain that they will be expressing their beliefs about this concept through a process called continuum voting. Describe the continuum voting strategy. The process is fully detailed in the introduction. Have students stand and prepare for participation.

Use the **Successful Living Continuum Voting** teacher page to conduct the activity. Read and discuss each statement before moving to the next. The questions on the teacher page can be used to help students clarify their thoughts and positions.

■ Tell students to highlight *adulthood* on the vocabulary list in their notebooks. Acknowledge the fears and excitement that accompany thinking about being an adult.

Distribute the **Reflections** worksheet. Review the directions with the class. Then ask students to complete the worksheet individually. When worksheets are completed, ask students if they were surprised by any of their answers. Why or why not?

Ask students to consider how they might best use the insights their answers offer. Because the questions are of a personal nature, however, it is important that students are not asked to share specific answers.

Evaluation

Have students write a paragraph about the insights they had on the **Reflections** worksheet. Look for growth in their understanding of possible difficulties in the transition to adulthood and possible ways to overcome these difficulties.

Life After Graduation

Directions: Answer the following questions. Include a brief summary of as many different ideas as you can for each question.

1. Why is a high school diploma important?
2. Why is it hard to answer the question, "What are you going to do when you graduate?"
3. What advice (words of wisdom) can you offer yourself and other teens about life after graduation?
4. What might help high school students start thinking about life after graduation?

Are You Ready for the Future?

Teenagers can feel overwhelmed by the variety of education and career choices they face. Many teens worry that they may make the wrong choice. This fear can make the task of decision making seem almost impossible. Actually, there are probably many things you could do well and would like doing. Your task is to choose one of many right options.

You will need to invest something in whatever choice you make, so you need to choose wisely. Your investment might be time, energy or money. But you *will* have to work for your choice in some way.

Remember, you probably won't be stuck forever with the decisions you make today. People change. Life situations change. What we know about the world changes. The world itself changes. Most people make many education and career choices in their lives.

A New Experience

Making life decisions may be a brand-new experience for you. Until now, other people have been responsible for you. They have made decisions about your life.

New things can be scary and uncomfortable. The first time we do something is usually the hardest. But with practice, we almost always get better. Some things may even become great fun.

As a child, paying for something by yourself, walking alone to a friend's house, learning to roller skate, etc., was exciting but scary. Being in charge of your own life is also exciting but scary. It gets easier, and you'll get better at it!

The Real World

People often tell high school students that when they graduate they will be in the *real* world and on their own. The real world might sound like a scary place. You may wonder, "Do I have what it takes to make it on my own?"

Actually, the real world is the same one you already know—we only have one! What changes is your *role* in that world.

The shift from dependence to independence happens gradually. It does not happen overnight at high school graduation. You will still have people around to help and support you. But the support people in your life will change. Instead of going to a teacher or parent for help, you may talk to a friend at work or a roommate.

Parents

Parents can sometimes make life difficult for children. Your parents' ideas about what is best for you may be different from what you want for yourself.

If you ignore your parents, you lose the benefit of the wisdom that comes with age. Your parents know you well. They understand your abilities and limitations. They probably love you and want the best for you as well. The worst thing that could happen if you ignore your parents is that you would lose their emotional and financial support.

If, however, you follow only your parents' wishes, you may ignore your feelings about what is best for you. You may feel unhappy, living a life you would not and did not choose.

But choosing to "never be like" your parents takes away the choice to be a "little like" them. When parents and children listen to each other, you can work together for your future.

Obstacles

Sometimes you may feel you don't have what it takes to get what you want out of life. You may think you lack money, intelligence, friends, etc. You may feel like you have no choices.

It can be hard to get what you want. You may face many difficulties. Your problems could be due to poverty, racism, poor health, etc. But people do overcome incredible problems and hardships.

Overcoming problems is never easy. But determination, effort and practice can make many things possible. When you learn to develop goal-setting skills, you can also learn to identify problems and obstacles. Then you can find ways to overcome these obstacles.

The Future

Some teenagers believe it's a waste of time to plan for the future. They think everything is changing so fast that no one knows what's going to happen next. Some teenagers even question whether they'll have a future. These teens may decide that it's best to live life for the moment and let the future take care of itself.

Think about people you know who live this way. Those people put life in control, not themselves. Whatever happens, happens. They get bounced through life like a ping-pong ball. As years pass, these people tend to be angry, frustrated and unhappy with life.

If you are to have purpose and direction in life, you must believe you have a future. What do you think it would be like to grow up surrounded by people who live as though there will be no tomorrow?

Life planning can help you enjoy today, while knowing that you are also in charge of your future. Life planning means playing offense, not defense. You choose and create for yourself what is best for you.

You will change. Your life situation will change. The world will change. New opportunities will arise throughout your life. Some of the new things you try will fail. Some will not. Life planning helps you direct and redirect your life as you and the world around you changes.

Successful Living

Continuum Voting

Strongly Agree **Strongly Disagree**

Directions: Begin the discussion of each statement by asking students to explain why they have chosen the positions they have. Start with the students who agree. Then move to those who disagree. Finally, check with those in neutral positions.

Encourage students to react to their classmates' ideas, but to avoid being judgmental (e.g., "I disagree because..." vs. "That's stupid!").

1. The teen years are a time to have fun. After all, the real world comes all too soon.

- ➔ Does the fun stop when you become an adult?
- ➔ How do you picture adulthood?
- ➔ What do people mean by the real world?
- ➔ Can you picture adults who really seem to enjoy their lives?
- ➔ What do they have going for them?
- ➔ What happens when people use the teen years for all fun and no work?
- ➔ What does it cost them?

2. Some people are just born losers.

- ➔ What does it mean to you to be a loser?
- ➔ Must everyone achieve the same kind of success in life?
- ➔ Can a person whose background includes abuse, violence, poverty or other problems ever hope for a different life?
- ➔ What proof do we have that people can overcome the odds against them?
- ➔ Are there limits in life?
- ➔ Do good looks, intelligence, love or money guarantee success?
- ➔ Do some people who are given everything have a hard time making it in the world?

3. Success means being rich and famous.

- ➔ Are money and fame really necessary for success?
- ➔ Is satisfaction with your life necessary?
- ➔ What gives you satisfaction?
- ➔ How do people's values affect their definition of success?

4. If a person is truly successful, other people are able to see this success.

- ➔ What do people generally look for as a symbol of success?
- ➔ Does our society look differently at wealth depending on how it is earned?
- ➔ If success is defined by each individual, what signs of success might you see by looking at the person rather than possessions?

Reflections

Directions: Complete the following statements as honestly as possible. Don't just respond as you think you should. Think about how you really feel.

1. For me, the most exciting thing about becoming an independent adult is...

2. For me, the scariest thing about becoming an independent adult is...

3. When I think about the way I think and live my life now, the things I like most are...

4. When I think about the way I think and live my life now, the things I most want to change are...



LESSON**3**

DISCOVERING ME

Objectives

Students will be able to illustrate self-knowledge.

Students will be able to explain the need for different life plans for different people.

Time

One or two class periods, and additional time for follow-up discussion when homework is completed.

Overview

The saying "If you don't know where you're going, you may end up somewhere else" is often quoted. A first step in determining where you're going is to know who you are as a person. Only then can you really focus on what you want and need in your life. Self-knowledge allows people to be not just actors, but directors in their own life experiences.

Students begin this lesson by drawing pictures to represent themselves. Students continue the process of self-discovery with a forced choice worksheet and discussion. Another worksheet encourages students to draw upon adult insights about the students' characters. Students summarize their self-knowledge in an essay.

Teacher Materials and Preparation

HAVE:

- ✓ Crayons or markers for students to use in drawings.

COPY:

- ✓ **Perfect Picture** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **Describing Me Forced Choice** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **Perspectives** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **Me: From the Inside Out** worksheet, one for each student.

REVIEW:

- ✓ Forced choice strategy description in the introduction.

Key Points

- Self-knowledge forms the basis for life planning.
- Different people want and need different things in their lives.
- Choices about education, career, income level, specific family circumstances, etc., need to be suited to an individual's abilities, values, needs and interests.

Procedure

- Tell students that *self-knowledge* is an important first step in *life planning*. Self-knowledge helps us determine what we want and need in our lives in order to feel satisfied. An important part of this is identifying the criteria we will use to define personal success. Emphasize that each of us has unique *values*, interests, abilities and limitations.

Tell students to highlight *self-knowledge*, *life planning* and *values* on the **Life-Planning Vocabulary** worksheet in their notebooks.

- Distribute the **Perfect Picture** worksheet and crayons or mark-

ers. Read the directions to the class. Tell students they will be asked to share their completed drawings with the class. *Note:* Color is a very personal preference. If at all possible, allow students to select their own colors.

Encourage students to make their drawings large and dark enough to be visible across the room. Ask them to think about the meaning of the drawing as they work.

Acknowledge that many people are uncomfortable about drawing, especially if they have limited artistic abilities. Tell students that the point of this activity is what their drawing represents, not how it is drawn.

If possible, have students seated in a circle. This will make it easier to share pictures in a comfortable environment. Encourage all students to participate in sharing, but don't require it. Ask students to listen without making judgments as others share their drawings.

When sharing is complete, lead a brief class discussion. Include the following questions:

- Was it hard to decide what to draw? Why or why not?
- Do you think you captured the spirit of yourself?
- Were you surprised by what you chose to draw?
- Why did you choose the colors you used?
- What similarities do you see in the drawings? what differences?

Optional: Use the **Perfect Picture** worksheets to make a mural for classroom display.

■ Distribute the **Describing Me Forced Choice** worksheet. Explain that this worksheet offers another way to increase self-knowledge. Review the directions with the class. Allow students time to complete the worksheet individually.

Describe the procedure for a forced choice discussion. Tell students to stand in the center of the room. Ask students to keep their worksheets with them to refer to during the discussion.

Read the first choice from the worksheet. Tell students to move to the side of the room that represents their choice. Remind students not to talk about the choices until all students have indicated their choices.

As students explain the first choice, offer questions and comments such as the following:

- Is it better to be a hammer or a nail?
- Some people take real interest and pride in being in authority; others prefer to do the job themselves.
- Some people don't want or need to be the authority figure; others may not have the ability.

Read the next choice and tell students to move again. Did everyone view Colorado and New York City in the same way? Why not?

When you have processed all the choices on the worksheet, use the following questions to guide class discussion:

- If other people were asked to make these choices for you, would they make the same choices? Why or why not?
- Whose choices would be more accurate?
- How can these insights be helpful?
- Why is self-knowledge important to successful life planning?
- How could these insights be used to guide life plans?

■ Distribute the **Perspectives** worksheet. If time allows, have students complete the first section in class. The entire worksheet could also be completed as homework. Ask students to select a parent or other adult whom they respect and trust to help them complete the assignment.

Since the information is personal, in-class discussion of the worksheet should discuss general reactions. Discussion could include the following questions:

- How did it feel to write down your strengths? your weaknesses?
- How did the adult you talked to feel about identifying your strengths or weaknesses?
- Were your answers similar or different? How do you explain this?
- Did any of the answers surprise you?
- Did you have trouble figuring out ways to use your strengths? your weaknesses?
- How can you use these insights?

■ Reemphasize the importance of self-knowledge as a first step in life planning. Tell students that self-knowledge is an accumulation of thoughts and feelings about our own abilities, interests and

limitations. Our self-knowledge develops from our life experiences and the feedback we receive from others.

Emphasize that we know ourselves from "the inside out"—a perspective no one else has. But emphasize, too, that others know us from the "outside in"—a perspective we can't have unless we ask for it. Encourage students to draw on the insights of both themselves and others to develop an accurate personal picture.

■ Have students highlight *insight* on the vocabulary list in their notebooks. Acknowledge that different people recognize different traits as strengths or weaknesses. Being talkative may be seen as a positive trait by some, a weakness by others.

Some of our limitations require that we acknowledge and accept them—so we can move on to focus on and use our strengths. Other weaknesses may actually be used as strengths—if we're willing to take the time and energy to do so!

Evaluation

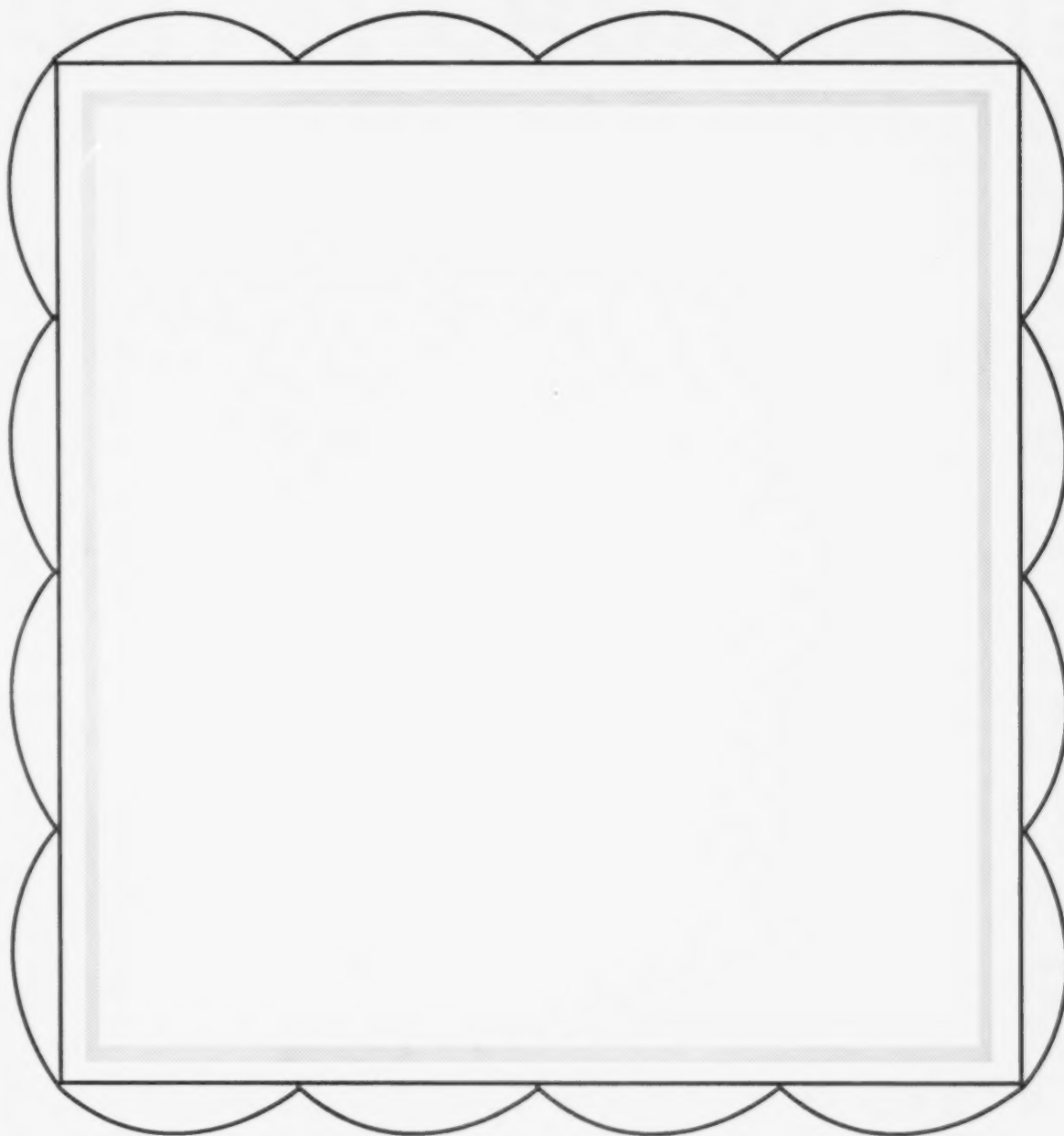
Give students the **Me: From the Inside Out** worksheet. Remind students that being able to answer the question "Who am I?" is critical to successful life planning. Emphasize that people and their life plans are ever-changing.

Increased self-knowledge offers us the best opportunity to direct and redirect our lives. Ask students to use the questions on the worksheet to develop a complete description of themselves. Review only for completion of the assignment.

If necessary for your assessment purposes, have students write a paragraph that they would feel comfortable sharing that illustrates their personal insights.

Perfect Picture

Directions: Draw a sign or symbol that represents who you are as a person. Do not use words. Try to picture more than just what you do and the roles you play.

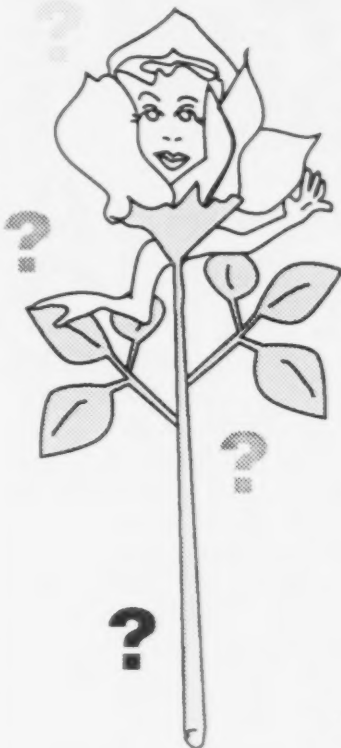


Describing Me

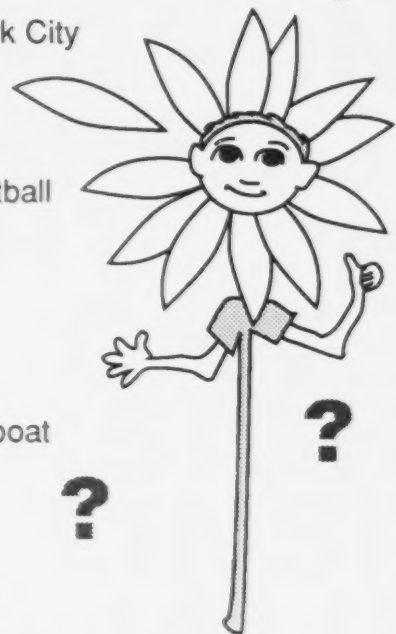
Forced Choice

Directions: For each pair of items in the following list, circle the one that best describes you. Make your choices as quickly as you can and without discussion with anyone.

I am more like:



1. a hammer ...OR... a nail
2. Colorado ...OR... New York City
3. blue ...OR... yellow
4. a basketball ...OR... a football
5. a rose ...OR... a daisy
6. a swing ...OR... a slide
7. a canoe ...OR... a speed boat
8. land ...OR... water
9. the sun ...OR... the moon
10. a welcome mat ...OR... a no-trespassing sign



Perspectives

Directions: Choose an adult you know well, respect and trust to complete this worksheet with you. Fold the paper along the dotted line, so that each of you can answer the questions without seeing the other's answers. When you are finished, take a few minutes to compare answers and talk about the questions that follow.

A. Student

1. In your own opinion, what are your four greatest strengths?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
2. In your own opinion, what are your two greatest weaknesses?
 - a.
 - b.

(FOLD)

B. Adult

1. In your opinion, what are this individual's four greatest strengths?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
2. In your opinion, what are this individual's two greatest weaknesses?
 - a.
 - b.

C. Student and Adult

How did it feel to answer these questions?

Are you surprised by how alike or different your answers are?

How do you explain the similarities? differences?

Why is it important to consider our strengths and weaknesses?

D. Student

Identify how two of your strengths and two of your weaknesses could be used to produce positive results in your life.

Example

Strength: Generous—I could volunteer my time to help tutor a sixth grader.

Weakness: Talkative—I could volunteer to work the teen hot lines.

Strengths

1.

2.

Weaknesses

1.

2.

Me: From the Inside Out

Directions: Write an essay describing who you are as a person. Answer the following questions to create as complete of a picture of yourself as you can.

1. What do I like?
2. What don't I like?
3. What really makes me happy?
4. What really upsets me?
5. What are the things I do well?
6. What are the things I don't do well?
7. What's important to me?



LESSON**4**

CREATING A VISION

Objective

Students will be able to describe a personally desirable future.

Time

Two class periods.

Overview

Young people need to develop a picture of what they want for themselves in the future. Only then can they give their lives purpose and direction. When we move toward the future we choose, we can direct and redirect our lives as our interests, commitments and needs change.

In this lesson, students explore options for the future through use of a brainstorming session, worksheets and class discussion. They examine case studies of students who are making choices about the future. Students also interview three adults for information about specific careers.

Teacher Materials and Preparation

HAVE:

- ✓ Chalk and chalkboard.

COPY:

- ✓ **Exploring Options** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **Examining Life Decisions** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ Enough copies of each **Case Study** for the members of one small group.
- ✓ **My Life at 29** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **Career Choices** worksheet, one for each student (optional).

MAKE:

- ✓ **Exploring Options** chart for classroom display (optional).
- ✓ Treasure map for classroom display (optional). See Evaluation for description.

Key Points

- Developing a vision of the future we desire is the second step in the life-planning process.
- A life option is desirable only if it meets our needs.
- Examination of others' life decisions can be a useful learning device for our own life planning.
- To experience growth in our lives, we must generally leave our safety zones.

Procedure

- Tell students that developing a vision of the future they desire is the second step in the life-planning process. Emphasize that successful life planning requires a sense of self and an understanding of our wants and needs.

Explain that it is often difficult to plan for the future. Students may have a tough time really seeing themselves in the future. Ask how many of them looked up to high school students when they were in grade school. Did they think that high school was so far away that they would never make it?

Briefly discuss student recollections. Follow this discussion with questions about the future. Include the following questions:

- Can you picture yourself as a 29-year-old?

- Can you picture you and your friends as computer programmers, flight attendants, salespersons, artists, teachers, doctors, carpenters, mechanics, bankers, business owners, police officers, parents?
- Why is it hard for some people to picture the future?

Remind students of how much they've changed as they've grown from infants, toddlers and children to become adolescents and young adults. Encourage them to appreciate the development they have already experienced. Help them understand that adulthood is the next step. This transition too will soon be very real for them.

■ Ask students to brainstorm the basic options for their lives after high school graduation. Without discussion, list them on the chalkboard. Be sure the following items are included in the list:

- continue living at home
- move out
- get married
- remain single
- go to school (college or career school)
- get a job
- join the military

Point out that each of these options is a broad category. There are many individual choices within each category. Note, however, that these options provide a starting point for exploring the future.

■ Distribute the **Exploring Options** worksheet. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Tell students to explore the pros and cons of each of the options, and identify pros and cons for each option on the worksheet. Depending on class ability, size and time available, you may want to assign only two of the options to each group for discussion.

When groups have completed their work, ask a representative from each group to share responses with the class. Students can take notes during the full group discussion to complete their worksheets as necessary and appropriate. Follow-up discussion may include the following questions:

- Why does our society map out a person's life through grade 12?
- Why are there so many options available after high school graduation?
- Which options are best?

Encourage students to recognize the importance of education, even though they may find school challenging or tedious. Education offers teenagers time to learn about themselves and their world. It also helps prepare teens to live on their own.

Be prepared for student comments such as, "Tell me when we're ever going to use..."; "It's stupid to make people stay in school if...." Encourage class discussion of these comments. You may decide to admit you've never used trigonometry, but explain that taking such classes keeps options open.

As you discuss post-high school options, emphasize the variety of available choices. The value of each choice is based on how well it meets our needs. We can only know this by exploring who we are and what we want in our lives.

■ Distribute the **Examining Life Decisions** worksheet. Explain that young people often feel that everyone else is in charge, and for parts of their life that may be true. However, we are all given the right to live only one life—our own. As students assume greater and greater responsibility for the direction of their lives, they can learn from examining other people's life decisions.

Divide the class into six small groups. Give each group a copy of one of the case studies. Tell groups they are each responsible for leading a class discussion of the case study they received. Each group will need to read and thoroughly discuss its assigned case study. Encourage groups to use the questions on the **Examining Life Decisions** worksheet as a basis for their preparation for the class discussion.

Tell groups to select someone in the group to read the case study aloud for the class. They should choose another group member to share the group's ideas with the class. As each group finishes its presentation, allow the class to add any additional ideas or concerns.

Note that some of the teens in the case studies appear to have limited life options, due to things outside their personal control. Tell students these limitations are obstacles, not barriers. Remind students that we can learn from hearing what others think is right for us, but we must also value our own thoughts and feelings.

■ Lead a class discussion of the *safety zone*. Remind students to

highlight this term on the vocabulary list. Ask students to brainstorm how this term might relate to life planning. Explain that the safety zone is composed of those things in life that are comfortable and require little thought or effort.

As they finish their school years, many young people find they are leaving what has become for them a safety zone. In order to move toward a satisfying future, students must make a choice for growth rather than a choice based on fear. Encourage students to accept the challenges of their goals, rather than following the path of least resistance.

Ask students to provide some examples of growth choices versus fear choices. Remind students that growth choices don't have to be big changes. If you choose to remain in the small town where you grew up because you really like small town life, that could be a growth choice.

On the other hand, if you stay in the same small town because you don't know what else to do or you're afraid of moving out into the larger world, that's a fear choice. Point out that learning to swim could involve a growth choice, but diving into a pool without testing the water could be foolish.

■ Distribute the **My Life at 29** worksheet. Tell students to think seriously about their personal futures. Tell them to decide what they would like to make happen in their lives by the time they are 25. Acknowledge that "I don't know" will be the first reaction of most students. Encourage them to think beyond this.

Allow students time to complete the worksheet individually. Then ask students to pair up with one other student to share their dreams. Complete this activity with a class discussion. Include the following questions:

- Is your view of the future consistent with the person you described yourself to be in Lesson 2?
- Were you surprised by any of the things you identified for your future?
- What kinds of changes have occurred in our world in the last 10 years?
- What kinds of changes do you think will occur in the next 10 years?
- Do you think these changes will affect the future you described for yourself today?

- If so, does that mean that planning doesn't work?

Remind students that while society will certainly be changing through the years, their individual futures continue to depend on the goals they establish for themselves.

Emphasize that different people want and need different things in life. Tell students that the more they focus on who they are and what they want out of life, the greater the likelihood that they will be able to make their dreams reality.

Evaluation

Have students use the ideas from the **My Life at 29** worksheet to create treasure maps. Their ideal futures will be the buried treasure. Have them identify obstacles along the path that leads to "X marks the spot." Tell students to describe in words or illustrate with drawings ways to overcome each obstacle. Encourage students to be creative.

Review the maps to assess students' growth in the ability to describe or illustrate a future that is personally desirable.

Follow-Up/ Extension

Ask students to interview three adults who are working in careers that interest them. Tell students to use the questions on the **Career Choices** worksheet as a guideline for these interviews. Students should write up each interview on a separate piece of paper.

Class discussion may include the following questions:

- Were people willing to talk with you?
- Were these people able to offer you any new insight on their careers?
- What was most interesting about the responses you received?
- Was it helpful to talk with these people? Why or why not?

If the class has access to a career center, this would be an ideal time for individual research or testing.

A career counselor may be able to offer information on career planning services and resources. A local community agency could

also be invited to class to present a session on volunteer opportunities for teens.

Exploring Options

Directions: Identify the pros and cons of each of these life options for someone who has just graduated from high school. Think in general terms—not just in terms of how each option would work for you.

<i>Living at Home</i>		<i>Moving Out</i>	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons

<i>Staying Single</i>		<i>Getting Married</i>	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons

<i>Going to College</i>		<i>Going to a Career/Vocational School</i>	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons

<i>Going to Work Full Time</i>		<i>Joining the Military</i>	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons

Examining Life Decisions

Directions: What we learn from the lives of others can help us find direction for our own lives. We all make our own life choices, with or without the approval of others.

As you read the case study assigned to your group, think about your feelings about the decision the student is making. Then discuss the following questions with your group.

1. What decision has the student made?
2. What factors influenced that decision?
3. What factors are within the student's control?
4. What factors are outside the student's control?
5. Which factors are most important?
6. How do you feel about the decision? Why?
7. What would you encourage the student to do? Why?

MIKE

Case Study

Mike is in tenth grade but has never liked school. Every day it is a struggle to get there—and then it's a bore! Everything seems like such a major waste of time. Everyone keeps telling him he needs to improve his attitude and buckle down.

The message Mike gets is that if he doesn't get his grades up, he won't make it in life. Mike figures good grades would be important if he wanted to be a doctor or lawyer, but those are the last things that interest him.

The only thing Mike gets excited about is his music. He knows he's good—he wants to make music his life. He hates the thought of spending two more years with people he has nothing in common with, learning stuff he never intends to use.

Both of Mike's parents have college educations. They believe you have to have that college degree to make it in life—even in music.

This makes no sense to Mike. His father hates his job, and his mother doesn't even use her degree. Mike's decided to drop out at the end of this school year and get on with his life.

CHRISTINA*Case Study*

Christina really wants to make her mark in life. She's a senior this year, so she's really starting to feel the pressure to make decisions.

Her mom and dad were divorced when Christina was little. She's watched her mom struggle just to make ends meet. Her mom's life has been all work and no play. No way does Christina want to follow in her mom's footsteps!

At this point, Christina doesn't think she'll ever want to get married. She wants to get an education and find a career she enjoys. Then she'll always be able to take care of herself—so she can *enjoy* life. But she's beginning to feel that it's hopeless.

Christina's always had to work hard for just average grades. She doesn't think her grades are good enough to get a scholarship. But there's no way she or her mom can afford to pay for college.

Christina's afraid her life is going to be the same struggle her mom's has been. Christina wants things to be different, but she doesn't see any way out.

JOE

Case Study

Joe and Terese have been dating since they were in eighth grade. Now they're seniors, and they're beginning to make plans for their life together. They are both honor students, and both have been offered scholarships at good universities.

Joe was interested in a career in social services, but Terese has convinced him there's no future in that field. She thinks the pay is too low.

Joe likes a simple life, but he wants to be able to give Terese what she wants. Terese plans to pursue a career in engineering. She wants Joe to do the same. Joe's bright, so he figures he can do well in anything.

Joe's friends have told him he'd be crazy to risk losing Terese. They say she's right about social service careers. Joe laughs at himself now for even considering that field. He intends to make Terese his life—and he's sure he can learn to enjoy the good life with her!

MARTA

Case Study

Marta is a junior. She is well known for her maturity and common sense. Her friends tease her about being an adult before her time. She's always upbeat and fun to be around. But she's also very definite about what she wants and doesn't want in her life.

Marta decided a long time ago that sex was going to have to wait. She's not ready to deal with birth control, babies or sexually transmitted disease. She's not interested in any kind of commitment.

She also stays away from alcohol or other drugs, because, as she says, "She wants a brain that will function." She's always challenged herself with the most difficult classes and pulled top grades, even though she had to work hard for them.

Marta wants to graduate early. Then she plans to take a year or two to work her way around the country. She wants to travel and explore life before she settles on college, career or marriage. Everyone tells her she's crazy, but she's determined.

KEVIN

Case Study

Kevin is in ninth grade. His home life has been miserable for as long as he can remember. His mother died when he was four, and his father has remarried twice. His current stepmother has two children of her own. Now she's pregnant again.

Kevin's relationship with his father has always been a little shaky. With all these extra people around, it's worse than ever. Kevin's tired of being yelled at and knocked around. He's tired of always going along with all his father's moves, job changes and marriages.

Kevin thinks the only person who really seems to understand and care about him is Lisa. Lately, Lisa's been especially worried. Kevin's been talking about quitting school, getting a job and moving out. Lisa's parents have said Kevin can move in with them if he stays in school.

With Lisa's urging, Kevin has decided he has nothing to lose by the move. Lisa is all that's important to him now. He plans to move in with Lisa's family, work odd jobs and save as much money as he can. He'll just take one step at a time and see how it goes.

ANDREA***Case Study***

Friends tease Andrea, a junior, about her split personality. They call it the "Why bother! Why not?" syndrome. If anyone tells Andrea that she should work or try harder, her standard reply is "Why bother!" If fun or play is suggested, you can count on her to say, "Why not?"

Andrea's always managed to slide by with OK grades, but she's definitely not into school. She thinks this is the time in her life to have fun. She'll work later.

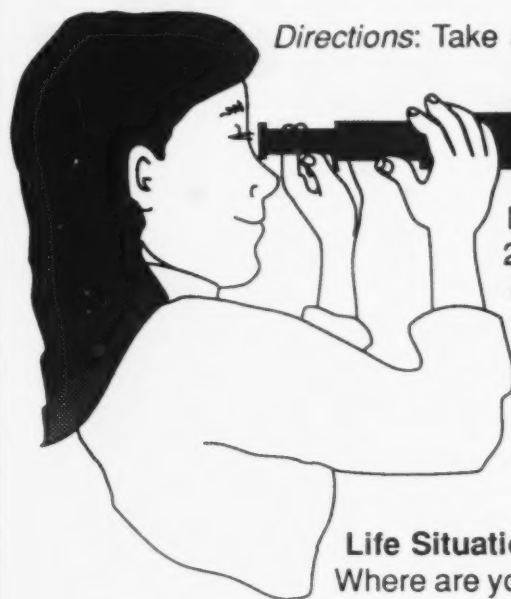
Andrea's parents have always pretty much let her do what she wanted. They've also given her what she wanted. Lately, however, her parents have started to put the pressure on. They want Andrea to be more concerned about her grades and to be more responsible. They want her to make plans for her future.

Now her parents' favorite message is "You're going to have to be more responsible. We're not always going to be here to bail you out and pay your bills. These next two years are going to pass fast!"

Andrea just smiles and says, "I know." Then she goes on her merry way.

Andrea plans to graduate and then go to the local junior college. She figures the time to make decisions is at least two years away. Until then, she plans to enjoy herself!

My Life at 29



Directions: Take a few minutes to think about what you would like to make happen in your adult life.

FUTURE

Picture yourself at age 29. Develop as much detail as you can. Describe briefly what you hope your life will be like in each of the following key areas. Then answer the questions about you at age 29.

Life Situation:

Where are you living? Do you live in an apartment? a house? in the city? in the country? What does it look like?

Education/Work:

How much education do you have? What kind of job or career do you have? How much money do you make?

Family/Friends:

Are you married? Do you have children? Who are your friends? How much time do you spend with friends? with family?

Hobbies/Recreation:

How much free time do you have? What do you do when you're not working? What's your favorite hobby or recreation?

Questions About You at Age 29:

1. How does it feel to imagine yourself in the future?
2. Would it be easier to imagine your life at age 19? Why or why not?
3. Are you picturing the world the same as it is now or are you expecting changes?
4. Do you think your picture is realistic? Why or why not?

Career Choices

Directions: Choose three people to interview who are currently working in jobs or careers that interest you. Use the following questions as a guideline for your interviews. Add additional questions of your own about each specific job or career. Use a separate piece of paper to write about each interview. Begin your write-up by identifying the job/career.

Questions:

1. Why did you choose this job/career?
2. How long have you been doing this kind of work?
3. How would you describe your typical work day?
4. What do you like most about this work?
5. What do you like least?
6. What education or experience is necessary for this job/career?

LESSON**5**

ACHIEVING DREAMS

Objectives

Students will be able to explain the importance of goal setting to life planning.

Students will be able to demonstrate goal-setting skills.

Time

Two class periods.

Overview

Thinking and dreaming are necessary parts of the life-planning process. Goal setting, however, is the critical third step. It determines whether thoughts and dreams will become reality. Goals serve as well-defined, achievable dreams with timelines. Goals help provide the clarity and motivation necessary to move people beyond their safety zones.

In this lesson, students are introduced to goal setting through worksheets and class discussion. They practice writing goal state-

ments. Students then identify personal goals and work with partners to discuss their goal plans.

Teacher Materials and Preparation

HAVE:

- ✓ Overhead projector.

COPY:

- ✓ **The Value of Goals** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **Goal-Setting Guidelines**, one for each student.
- ✓ **Goal Statements** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **A Personal Goal** worksheet, two for each student.

MAKE:

- ✓ Transparency of **Goal-Setting Guidelines**.
- ✓ Classroom display of **Goal-Setting Guidelines** (optional).

REVIEW:

- ✓ **Teacher Background Information**.

Key Points

- Goal setting is the critical third step in the life-planning process.
- Effective goals are clearly stated in writing. They are reasonable, measurable, desirable and reflect individual effort.
- Achieving goals involves overcoming obstacles, as well as taking the necessary action steps.

Procedure

- Introduce goal setting as the third very important step in the life-planning process. Point out the definition of *goal* on the vocabulary list. Note that personal goals allow people to live life with purpose and direction.

Goals give us the power to take charge of our own lives. Goals help us experience joy and satisfaction as we live the lives we've chosen. Tell students to highlight the terms *goal* and *power* on the vocabulary list.

- Distribute **The Value of Goals** worksheet. Divide students into

groups of three or four students each. Tell students to take a few minutes to brainstorm about what goals are and how they are used. Ask students to work together to complete the worksheet.

When students have completed the small group work, lead a class discussion of goals. This discussion should center on students' thoughts about a definition for and the purpose of goals. Students will work on actual goal setting later in the lesson. Use **Teacher Background Information** on goals to guide this discussion.

■ Distribute the **Goal-Setting Guidelines**. Use a transparency of the worksheet to guide a class discussion of goal setting. Explain that there are specific differences between goal setting and dreaming. Strong goal-setting skills make it easier to achieve our goals. Remind students that our goals have evolved out of dreams and visions for our future.

Discuss each of the goal-setting guidelines. Explain how each guideline helps us define and refine our goals. Note that short-term goals are often very clear-cut, as they may involve only a single step. Long-term goals usually include several short-term goals. Sometimes, not all of the short-term goals are apparent as we begin progress toward the primary, long-term goal.

Emphasize the importance of having written goals. This step may sound simple, but it makes goals real. It helps us stay focused and motivates us to accomplish the goals.

■ Distribute the **Working on Goal Statements** worksheet. Tell students to rewrite the goals on the worksheet, using the guidelines just discussed. Tell students there may be more than one way to rewrite each goal.

When students have completed the assignment, ask for volunteers to share what they have written. Encourage volunteers to explain what was wrong with the examples.

■ Give each student two copies of **A Personal Goal** worksheet and present a short lecture on goals. (You may want to make additional copies available as necessary and appropriate.) Explain that when practicing goal-setting skills, students should first focus on short-term goals. Tell students to choose a goal they can accomplish within a week or two or not more than a month.

One worksheet should be used to identify a short-term goal; the other worksheet should be used to focus on a long-term goal. Suggest that students use the second worksheet to begin to develop six-month to year-long goals. Also, they can begin to plan for post-high-school goals that will take several years to achieve.

Encourage students to recognize the importance of each question on the worksheet. We can stay motivated and goal directed when we know why a goal is important to us. Too many people forsake their dreams when the going gets rough. They see clearly everything that might prevent them from reaching their goals.

Students must recognize that roadblocks will challenge them. We usually have to leave a personal safety zone in order to grow. If we identify the obstacles to meeting our goals, we can develop strategies to overcome them.

Encourage students to look for resources outside themselves to help them overcome obstacles and reach goals. They may need information or the help of friends, mentors or parents. Emphasize that action steps provide a starting place for achieving goals.

Have students work individually on the first worksheet, focusing on a short-term goal. As time is available, they should start the second worksheet, focusing on a long-term goal.

■ Divide the class into pairs to discuss their attempts at completing **A Personal Goal** worksheet(s). Ask students to help each other identify obstacles and create action steps for achieving goals. *Note:* Students should be allowed to pass if they do not wish to share goal information in groups.

Lead a brief class discussion of the worksheet. Include the following questions:

- How did it feel to write down your goals?
- Was it hard to identify obstacles and think of ways to overcome them? Why or why not?
- Did it help to talk to others about the obstacles? Why or why not?
- Are there other people you could talk to or other sources of information you could use? Explain.
- Are your action steps things that you can begin to do now? What are they?
- Do your goals feel real to you?

- Do you think your chances of achieving these goals have improved since we started working on the goal-setting process? Why or why not?

Emphasize the need to set goals that are clearly defined and can be achieved. It is also important to be specific about how the goal can be measured. Then we can look back on our work and say, "I did it!"

Encourage students to use the goals they have written as a starting point for making the future of their dreams happen. Emphasize that much of our life experience depends on what we are willing to make it.

Evaluation

Observe students' responses during class discussions and group activities to assess their understanding of the importance of goal setting in their lives.

Review student work on the **Working on Goal Statements** and **A Personal Goal** worksheets to assess goal-setting skills.

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Goals

People who achieve their goals generally are those who take time to clearly define what they want. Their goals are realistic and specific. Goals allow them to live with a vision of their desired future.

These people establish steps that allow them to reach the goals. They take action, rather than waiting for goals to magically happen. Their goals include target dates.

Some people really do little more than wish. They never analyze what it takes to get what they want. Because they haven't analyzed the process, they can't take steps toward achieving what they think they want.

However, goal setting can be taken to an extreme. People can become so goal-oriented that they develop tunnel vision. They don't see or appreciate anything that is not related to their goals.

People who adopt this extreme attitude often believe that life is to be worked at, not enjoyed. They may experience very little satisfaction when a goal is reached. The achieved goal is simply replaced by a new goal and new efforts to achieve that goal.

Sometimes our goals will not be achieved. As we change, we may need to update or change our goals to reflect new needs. Old goals may be replaced by new goals. A goal is only desirable as long as it serves our needs.

Goals can offer peace of mind. Their structure can help us enjoy life and take advantage of opportunities.

The Value of Goals

Directions: Discuss each of the following questions with your group. Write a brief response to each question.

1. Some people set and achieve goals easily. Others talk about what they want but never seem to make anything happen. What makes these two kinds of people different?
2. Can a person who is fun-loving and impulsive work well with goals? Why or why not?
3. How can goals help people enjoy and make the most of life?
4. How could goals have a negative effect on someone's life?
5. Should people push themselves to reach all of the goals they set? Why or why not?

Goal-Setting Guidelines

1. State each goal clearly.

- ✧ Identify one goal at a time.
- ✧ Be specific. Don't use general terms like best, great, famous.
- ✧ Decide on the first step.
- ✧ Use definite terms. Say "I will," rather than "I'll try."

Examples:

"I want to be successful."—*too general; not specific; not clear*

"I will graduate from college by age 25."—*specific; clear*

2. Be sure the goal is reasonable for you.

- ✧ Choose a goal that interests you.
- ✧ Check that you have the ability to achieve the goal.

Examples:

"I will be valedictorian of my graduating class even though I'm barely passing now."—*not reasonable*

"I will maintain passing grades in all of my classes during this six-week grading period."—*reasonable*

3. Choose a goal over which you have control.

- ✧ Whenever possible, base your goal on your own effort.
- ✧ If your goal requires cooperation, obtain the other person's permission and establish the goal as a joint goal.
- ✧ If your goal involves effort or action on someone else's part, state it as an invitation or request.

Examples:

"I will be on the varsity basketball team."—*out of your personal control*

"I will try out for the basketball team."—*within your personal control*

4. State your goal in terms you can measure.

- ⊕ Include the quantity (how much) you wish to achieve.
- ⊕ Set up a time frame for completing your goal (by when).

Examples:

"I will get information on colleges."—*unclear; no measurements on how much or by when it will be obtained*

"I will send four letters requesting information to colleges I'm interested in by Saturday."—*clear; specific quantities and deadlines identified*

5. Be sure your goal is desirable.

- ⊕ Be sure the goal is something you really want to do.
- ⊕ Be sure the goal improves life for yourself and is not hurtful to others or destructive.

Examples:

"I will get \$10 from Mom's purse by noon Saturday."—*could be hurtful to Mom*

"I will earn \$10 by noon on Saturday by mowing the lawn."—*desirable, not hurtful to others*

6. Write your goal down.

Begin your goal notebook today!

Working on Goal Statements

Directions: Use the **Goal-Setting Guidelines** to rewrite each of these goal statements. Try to improve the goal statement without changing the goal. If a goal is too vague, however, provide an example of how it might be made more specific and clear.

“I want to be a successful artist.”—*too general*

Better:

“I want to be a bookkeeper, a word processor or an insurance agent.”—*multiple goals; not clear*

Better:

“I’m going to start studying harder.”—*too vague; be specific*

Better:

“I’m going to save all of the money I make this year.”—*not realistic*

Better:

“I’m going to convince my mother to let me buy a motorcycle.”—*not in your control*

Better:

“I will learn to speak a new language.”—*unclear; unmeasurable*

Better:

Working on Goal Statements

Example

Directions: Use the **Goal-Setting Guidelines** to rewrite each of these goal statements. Try to improve the goal statement without changing the goal. If a goal is too vague, however, provide an example of how it might be made more specific and clear.

“I want to be a successful artist.”—*too general*

Better: ***After high school, I will start taking art classes in July and practice my sculpture, so I can enter my work in local art shows.***

“I want to be a bookkeeper, a word processor or an insurance agent.”—*multiple goals; not clear*

Better: ***In the fall after I graduate, I will take an accounting class at the community college.***

“I'm going to start studying harder.”—*too vague; be specific*

Better: ***This week I will study each night from 7-9 p.m.***

“I'm going to save all of the money I make this year.”—*not realistic*

Better: ***I will save \$50 a month so that at the end of this year, I will have saved \$600.***

“I'm going to convince my mother to let me buy a motorcycle.”—*not in your control*

Better: ***This weekend I will talk to my mother about my transportation needs. I'll suggest that with the savings from my summer job, I'd like to buy a motorcycle.***

“I will learn to speak a new language.”—*unclear; unmeasurable*

Better: ***Starting in September, I will take a semester adult education course, Introduction to Spanish.***

A Personal Goal

Directions: Take a few minutes to think about who you are and where you want to go in life. Consider your family, your education, your current job, your future career, your relationships. Also think about your values, interests and abilities.

Then ask yourself, "Where do I want to go with my life?" Identify a personal goal you would like to achieve. Use the **Goal-Setting Guidelines** to write your goal statements. Choose a partner with whom to share your ideas. Ask your partner for ideas about overcoming obstacles and additional action steps.

My goal:

1. Why is this goal important?
2. What obstacles could make it difficult to achieve this goal?
3. What can I do to overcome these obstacles?
4. What action steps will I take to achieve my goal? (Include the use of any resources that may help you achieve this goal.)

I will...

I will...

I will...

I will...

I will...

LESSON
6

THINKING FOR SUCCESS

Objectives

Students will be able to illustrate the impact of positive and negative thinking on goal achievement.

Students will be able to identify attitudes that foster personal success.

Time

One class period.

Overview

A discussion of life planning is not complete without emphasizing the impact of thoughts and attitudes on the life experience. People hold tremendous power to determine how excited, challenged and motivated—or how angry, overwhelmed and frustrated—they are going to be.

In this lesson, students work in small groups on a worksheet to study the attitudes that lead to success. A class discussion helps

students identify characteristics of successful people. Finally, students are encouraged to continue using their life-planning notebooks to develop and track personal goals.

Teacher Materials and Preparation

HAVE:

- ✓ Overhead projector.

COPY:

- ✓ **The Power of Words** worksheet, one for each student.
- ✓ **An Attitude for Success** worksheet, one for each student.

MAKE:

- ✓ Transparency of **An Attitude for Success**.
- ✓ Classroom display of **The Power of Words** and/or **An Attitude for Success** (optional).

Key Points

- Positive thoughts and attitudes are essential to the achievement of personal success.
- People who believe nothing can be done accomplish nothing.
- People who believe in themselves, their goals and their ability to accomplish these goals are willing to invest time and effort. They increase the odds that they will experience success. They also experience the joy and satisfaction that accompanies this personal success.

Procedure

■ Introduce this last lesson by emphasizing the importance of thoughts and attitudes in our life experience. Note that self-knowledge, dreams and quality goals make it possible to achieve personal success. Positive thoughts and attitudes provide the power to carry out our goals.

■ Distribute **The Power of Words** worksheet. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Tell students to list the phrases that discourage or encourage them.

When the lists are complete, ask groups to share their lists with the class. Discuss students' reactions to the phrases. Point out the importance of encouragement as students work to achieve their goals. Suggest that students think about how they talk to themselves and others and try to increase their use of encouraging words.

■ Distribute **An Attitude for Success** worksheet. Use a transparency of the worksheet to guide a discussion of traits that lead to success. Tell students to highlight the term *success* on the vocabulary list.

Acknowledge that there are different definitions of success. It can relate to being rich and famous, or it can mean a personal achievement. But most successful people share some basic characteristics. Encourage students to provide examples of each characteristic.

■ Tell students that the life-planning notebooks they've created can be valuable for future reference. Encourage students to continue learning about themselves and life. Encourage them to dream.

Tell students they can use the life-planning notebook to develop and keep track of personal goals. Encourage them to believe in themselves and their ability to make good things happen in their lives.

Evaluation

Pose the question "How can words be powerful?" to students. Have them illustrate the answer to this question in writing, with pictures or in a roleplay. Structure the assignment so that students address the relationship attitudes have to success. As appropriate, display student work.

Follow Up/ Extension

Suggest that students examine the influence of friends. Point out that the people we spend our time with can help us keep our lives on track or knock us off course. Emphasize the importance of positive friendships.

Ask students to consider the following three questions:

- With whom do I spend my time?
- How do I think, act and feel when I'm with these people?
- Is this friendship good for me?

Then ask students to write about the influence of their friends.

The Power of Words

Directions: Make a list of the words or phrases you say to yourself, or others say to you, that encourage and motivate you. Then list the words or phrases you say to yourself, or others say to you, that tend to discourage you, make you doubt yourself or give up.

Encouraging

Examples: "This is great!"

"If anyone can do it, you can!"

Discouraging

Examples: "This is stupid anyway!"

"Nobody else has ever been able to do it. What makes you think you can?"

An Attitude for Success

1. *Be flexible.*

- Make a decision and act on it.
- Be aware that other choices may develop later.
- Remain open to doing something new.

2. *Be aware that there is more than one right choice.*

- What may be best for you may not be best for someone else.
- Often you must choose between things that have similar value.
- What may seem the best choice one day may not seem so the next.

3. *Know what you control and what's out of your control.*

- Make the changes you want in your life.
- Accept those things that can't be changed.
- Turn disadvantage into advantage.

4. *Move out of the safety zone when necessary.*

- Be willing to feel nervous or anxious at times.
- Dare to take risks.

5. *Accept differences.*

- Be tolerant of many types of people.
- Accept different ways of life.

6. *Appreciate the interdependence of human beings.*

- Ask for help when you need it.
- Offer your help when you can.
- Delegate authority when it's appropriate.
- You don't have to do everything for yourself or by yourself.

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# 373 A Time of Change	# 181 Menstruation Facts* # 182 Puberty Facts* # 188 Male Facts* # 193 Female Facts*
# 374 Choosing Abstinence	# 138 Deciding About Sex: The Choice to Abstain # 097 Sex? Let's Wait!
# 375 Learning About Reproduction and Birth	# 188 Male Facts* # 193 Female Facts*
# 376 Avoiding Drugs	# 189 Drug Facts*
#381 Living Without Tobacco	# 083 About Tobacco # 098 Cigarettes! # 095 Smokeless Tobacco!

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